Global Agenda for Sustainable Development

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While governing the people-to-land relationships, land governance and the operational component of land administration systems need a spatial framework of large-scale mapping to operate. There is an urgent need to build simple and basic systems using a flexible and low-cost approach to identify the way land is occupied and used.

By Stig Enemark, Former FIG President

The best way to experience land management in practice is to ask for a window seat in the aeroplane. What you see of the land-use pattern on the ground is a picture of the land management process of the area/country you are flying over. Good or bad, the land management process of a country is the outcome of adopted land policies and implementation through land-use planning and administration; or sometimes it may be the result of the lack of such policies and sound institutions for land administration.

Land management is not a technical discipline. Land management and governance is about the policies, processes and institutions by which land, property and natural resources are managed. Sound land management requires a legal regulatory framework and operational land administration processes to implement policies in sustainable ways. Sound land management and governance should also support the global agenda by addressing issues such climate change, the

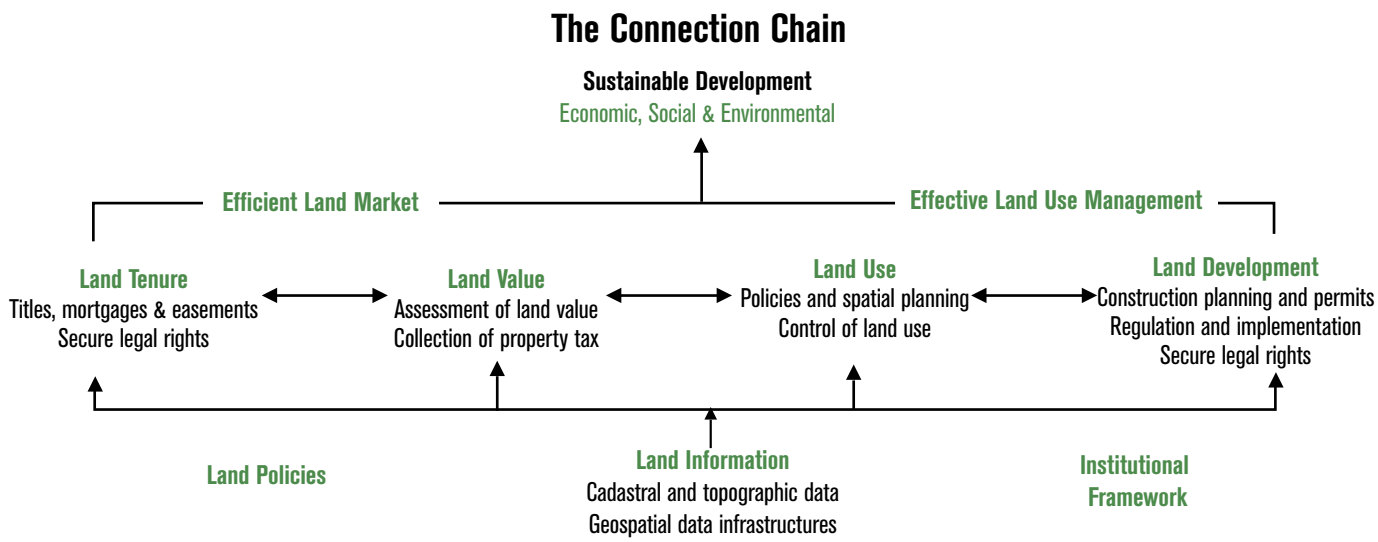


Figure 1: A global land management perspective (Williamson et al, 2010)

Millennium Development Goals, responsible governance of tenure, human rights, rapid urbanisation, and the overall issue of sustainable development.

Land management & administration

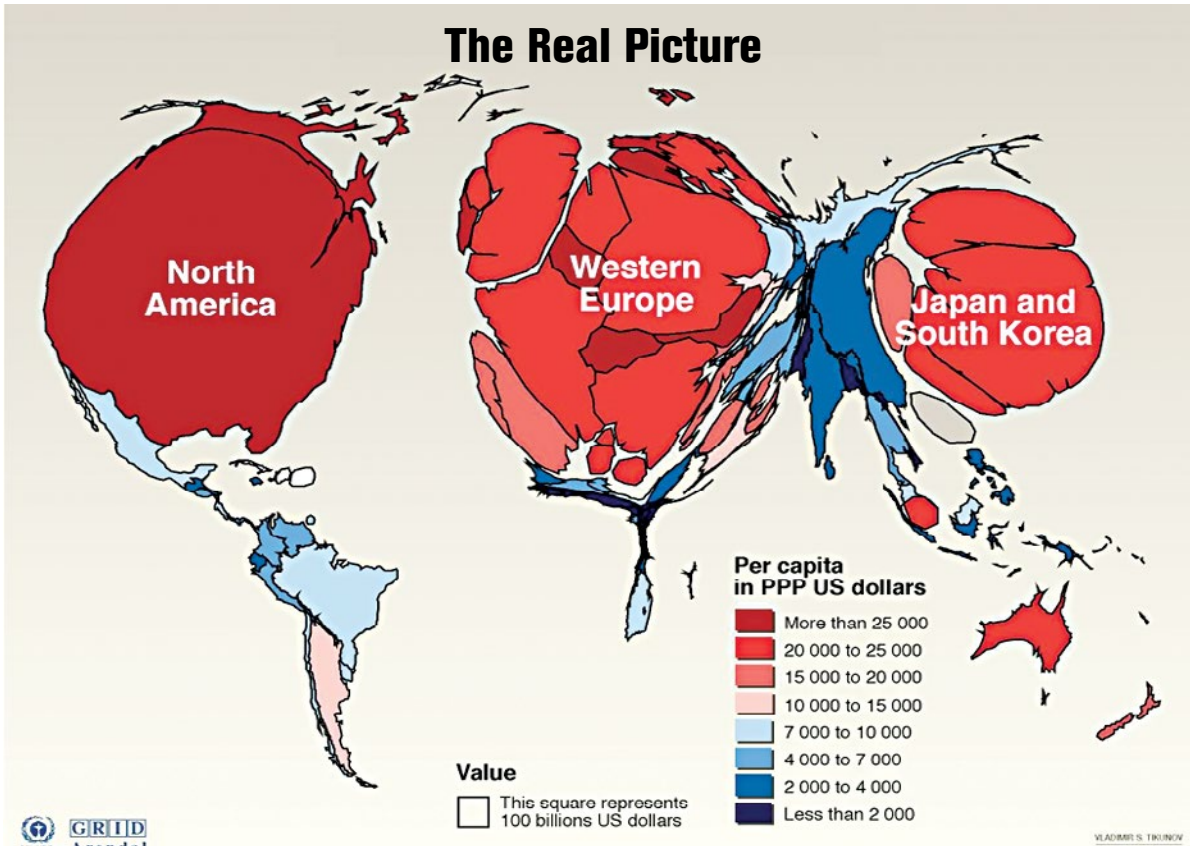
Land administration systems provide a country with an infrastructure for implementation of land policies and land management strategies in support of sustainable development. This is not a new discipline but has evolved out of the cadastre and land registration areas with specific focus on security of land rights. The need to address land management issues systematically pushes the design of land administration systems towards an enabling infrastructure for implementing land policies. Such a global land management perspective is presented in Figure 1.

The operational component of the land management concept is the range of land administration functions that include the areas of land tenure (securing and transferring rights in land and natural resources); land value (valuation and taxation of land and properties); land use (planning and control of the use of land and natural resources); and land development (implementing utilities, infrastructure, and construction planning). The four functions interact to deliver overall policy objectives, and they are facilitated by appropriate land information infrastructures that include cadastral and topographic datasets linking the built and natural environment.

These four functions ensure the proper management of rights, restrictions, and responsibilities in relation to property, land and natural resources. Ultimately, the design of adequate systems of land tenure and land value should support efficient land markets capable of supporting trading in simple and complex commodities. The design of adequate systems to deliver land-use control and land development should lead to effective land-use management. The combination of efficient land markets and effective land-use management is then seen as a key component in delivering economic, social and environmental sustainable development.

Sound land administration systems deliver a range of benefits to the society in terms of: support to governance and the rule of law; alleviation of poverty; security of tenure; support for formal land markets; security for credit; support for land and property taxation; protection of state lands; management of land disputes; and improvement of land-use planning and implementation. The systems enable the

Land-use pattern as seen from an aeroplane



Courtesy: UNEP/GRID Arendal

Figure 2: A hypothetical world map generated using the gross domestic product as the scale for territorial size (2002)

implementation of land policies to fulfil political and social objectives and to achieve sustainable development.

Sound land management requires operational processes to implement land policies in comprehensive and sustainable ways. Many countries, however, tend to separate land tenure rights from land-use opportunities, thereby undermining their capacity to link planning and land-use controls with land values and the operation of the land market. These problems are often compounded by poor administrative and management procedures that fail to deliver required services. Investment in new technology will only provide limited solutions in the major task of solving a much deeper problem, namely the failure to treat land and natural resources as a coherent whole.

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The global agenda

The global agenda is three-fold and has changed over the recent decades. In the 1990s, the focus was on sustainable development; in the 2000s the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted as the overarching agenda; and in the 2010s there is an increasing focus on climate change and related challenges such as natural disasters, food shortage and environmental degradation. Finally, rapid urbanisation has appeared as a general trend that in itself has a significant impact on climate change and sustainability.

Good land management and governance should be seen as a means in support of the global agenda. If a hypothetical map of the world is generated by using the gross domestic product as the scale for territorial size — the so-called western regions North America, Western Europe, South Korea

and Japan would "balloon" while other regions such as Africa and Central Asia would almost disappear (Figure 2). The global agenda is very much about bringing this map back to scale through poverty eradication, improving education and health, facilitating economic development, encouraging good governance, and ensuring sustainability.

Sustainable development

The global partnership for sustainable development as established through the UN Agenda 21 is a global action plan for sustainable development into the 21st century. Sustainable development is a process that aims to meet the needs of the present generation without harming the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It is not only about particular environmental issues such as species extinction and pollution but also about economic progress which meets all our needs without leaving future generations with fewer resources than we enjoy (*UN, 1992*).

This global partnership is still the foundation of the global agenda. In striving for sustainability most countries have recognised the fundamental relationship between people and land. The overall goal of sustainable development is an equitably distributed level of economic and social well-being that can be sustained over many generations while maintaining the quality of the environment. This calls for the elimination of poverty and deprivation, and it requires the conservation and enhancement of the resource base.

Land not only contributes to wealth and economic development but also is a part of the social and political fabric that sustains all communities. Additionally, land represents a fundamental component of ecosystems. Managing the relationship between land and people inevitably and universally raises emotions and is at the heart of many cultural sensitivities. It is of crucial importance that the issues raised by land governance, management and administration are openly and sensitively addressed.

Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) form a blueprint agreed upon by all the world's countries and the leading development institutions. The first seven goals are mutually reinforcing and are directed at reducing poverty in all its forms. The last goal — global partnership for development — is about the means to achieve the first seven. These goals are now placed at the heart of the global agenda. To track the progress in achieving the MDGs, a framework of targets and indicators is developed. This framework includes 18 targets and 48 indicators enabling the on-going monitoring of the progress that is reported on annually *(UN, 2000)*.

MDG Goal 1 targets to bring down by 50% the proportion of people whose income is less than $1 per day between 1990 and 2015. At a global scale, this target will actually be met — but with huge deviations for various regions throughout the world. The big contribution to meeting the target comes from China and Southeast Asia while poverty alleviation in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa is progressing at a much slower pace or hardly moving at all.

The Sub-Saharan Africa region has seen many positive developments and experienced progress in several areas in the past decade, primarily thanks to Africa's own efforts and reforms. Economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa has been considerable with a rate of above 5% per year for more than a decade. Projections of the World Bank indicates that this will continue for the years ahead while the global economy will grow at only 2.5% (and only about 1% in Western economies). So, Africa is expected to grow twice as fast as the global economy. However, Sub-Saharan Africa is still mostly poor and has been unable to translate its recent robust growth into rapid poverty reduction. Compared to other developing regions Sub-Saharan Africa has generally been left behind and are struggling with issues such as insecurity of tenure, informal settlements and urban slums, land ownership inequalities and landlessness, and degrading of natural resources. These facts indicate that poor land governance, including the manner

The Three-fold Global Agenda

Sustainable Development (1990s)
- Economic
- Social
- Environmental

Millennium Development Goals (2000s)
- Poverty alleviation
- Human health, education
- Global partnership

Climate Change (2010s)
- Natural disasters
- Food shortage
- Environmental degradation

Courtesy: Christiaan Lemmen

Satellite imagery as basis for data collection. People immediately recognise the roads and spatial units on the images.

in which land rights are defined and administered, may be the root of the problem (*Byamugisha, 2013*).

The World Bank has addressed this problem in a new publication, *Securing Africa´s Land for Shared Prosperity*, presenting a 10-point programme to scale up land policy reforms and investments for improving land governance in sub-Saharan Africa. The key elements include: improving tenure security and land access; increasing efficiency and transparency in land administration services; developing capacity in land administration; and increasing scope and effectiveness of land-use planning. The programme indicates that it would cost African countries and their development partners a $4.5-billion spread over 10 years to scale up these policy reforms and investments.

The MDGs are also a good example of the phrase: "If we can measure it, we can better it". This phrase relates to the fact, that without a road map for measuring the progress, most UN or government pronouncements will have little impact and are easily forgotten — no matter how well-meaning they may be. But by monitoring and documenting the on-going progress, governments can justify activities and costs and also attract donor money toward meeting the country specific targets. Land management and administration play an important role in providing the relevant statistics in measuring such progress.

MDGs do not mention land management and governance or security of tenure in specific terms. However, MDGs represent a wider concept or a vision for the future, where the contribution of good land governance is vital. This perspective will also continue for the post 2015-development agenda for 'Sustainable Development Goals' where indicators are currently being considered for measuring the further progress, e.g. in relation to secured land rights, equal rights of women, and legal recognition of the continuum of land rights (*FIG/World Bank, 2010*).

Land Governance Assessment Framework

Another good example of measuring and monitoring is the Land Governance Assessment framework (LGAF) developed by the World Bank in conjunction with UN and other partners. The LGAF provides a holistic diagnostic review at the country level that can inform policy dialogue in a clear and targetted manner. This quick and innovative tool to monitor land governance is built around five main areas for policy intervention: rights recognition and enforcement; land-use planning, land management, and taxation; management of public land; public provision of land information; and dispute resolution and conflict management. The LGAF helps policymakers and other stakeholders to make sense of the technical levels of the land sector, benchmark governance, prioritise reforms in the land sector and identify areas that require further attention (*World Bank, 2011)*. Further examples are the annual World Bank "Doing Business" reports, and the annual "Corruption Perception" Index of Transparency International that are both available on the Web.

Responsible governance of tenure

In regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, more than two-thirds (in some countries as much as 90%) of the land is outside

Customary tenure areas are normally outside the formal land registration system; a case of Malawi

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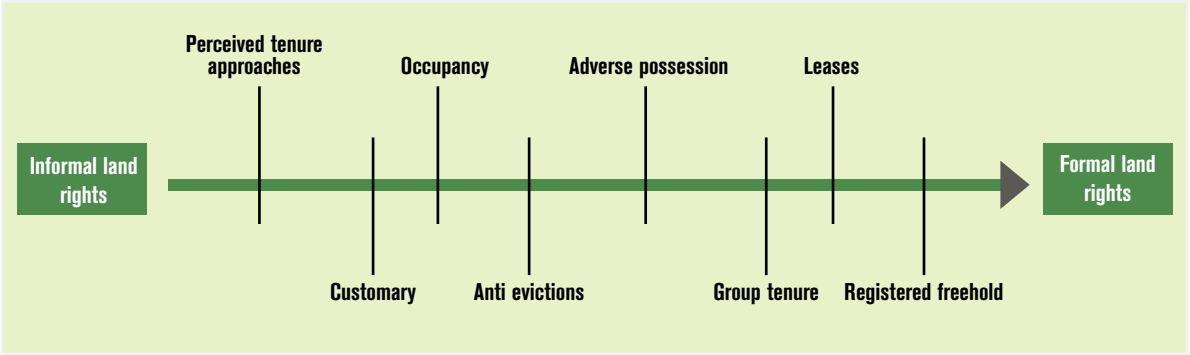


Continuum of land rights, FIG/GLTN

the formal systems of land registration and administration. This means that the existing formal systems do not serve the millions of people whose tenures are predominantly social rather than legal.

UN-HABITAT has developed an innovative approach through the so-called "Social Tenure Domain Model" (STDM) that includes a "scaling up approach" with a range of steps from informal to more formalised land rights *(FIG/GLTN, 2010)*. This continuum of land rights does not mean that societies will develop into freehold tenure systems, but rather that each step in the process can be formalised, with registered freeholds providing a stronger protection, than at earlier stages.

Furthermore, responsible governance of tenure is now incorporated as part of the global agenda through the recently published Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure, *(see article on Page 37)*. The guidelines are an international "soft law instrument" that represents a global consensus on internationally accepted principles and standards for responsible practices. The guidelines promote secure tenure rights and equitable access to land as a means of eradicating hunger and poverty, supporting sustainable development and enhancing the environment.

The guidelines outline principles and practices that governments can refer to when making laws and administering land, fisheries and forest rights. While the guidelines acknowledge that responsible investments by the public and private sectors are essential for improving food security, they also recommend that safeguards be put in place to protect tenure rights of local people from risks that could arise from large-scale land acquisitions, and also to protect human rights, livelihoods, food security and the environment. The guidelines thereby place tenure rights in the context of human rights such as the right to adequate food and housing.

Land ownership and secure tenure can be a vital source of capital, which opens personal credit markets, leads to investments in land buildings, provides a social safety net, and transfers wealth to next generation. However, in several less developed countries most people do not have legal documents for the land they occupy or use and thereby fall outside the formal management system. This means that most decisions are made without information. This will cause dysfunctionalities in the management of urban and rural areas from the household up to government level, which impair the lives of millions of people — (*UN-HABITAT, GLTN, 2012*).

Human rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948) states the universal rights of human beings based on the principle of respect for individuals — rights that can be enjoyed by everyone simple because of being alive. In relation to land and governance, the Declaration states that everyone has the right to adequate standard of living including housing, food, clothing, medical help and social services. This is further interpreted by the UN as merely a social right to "minimal property" such as "adequate food, clothing and housing", and further, that the right to housing should not be understood in a narrow sense which equates it with for example the shelter — while, rather, it should be seen as the right to live somewhere

Fast Facts

70% of the growth currently happens outside of the formal planning process

30% of urban population in less developed countries is living in slums or informal settlements

90% of all new urban settlements are taking the form of slums in sub-Saharan Africa

The issue of climate change adaptation does not necessarily relate to the inequity between the developed and less developed countries

in security, peace and dignity. The right to adequate housing therefore cannot be viewed in isolation from other human rights contained in the Universal Declaration.

The human rights to posses property and to enjoy adequate housing are fundamental and should be encouraged and promoted through building adequate systems of land administration that are relevant and accessible for poor people and serve their needs in a wider societal context.

Obviously, human rights and land management and administration are closely linked. Therefore, every state needs to ensure that efficient and effective land management and administration mechanisms are in place to pursue this interaction. More generally, human rights should be seen as an ethical responsibility of governments to ensure that people enjoy some basic rights as human beings. This relates to national political arrangements and standards for good governance. It also relates to historical and cultural development throughout the world including colonisation and armed conflicts.

Climate change

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has stated (2009) that "climate change is the defining challenge of our time". He had said that "combining the impacts of climate change with the global financial crisis, we risk that all the efforts that have been made by countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals and to alleviate poverty, hunger and ill health will be rolled back. It is clear that those who suffer the most from the increasing signs of climate change are the poor. Those that contributed the least to this planetary problem continue to be disproportionately at risk". However, the impact of climate change can be greatly reduced through careful land-use planning and administration so that cities keep their ecological footprint to the minimum and make sure that citizens, are protected as best as possible against disaster.

Climate change mitigation refers to efforts and means for reducing the anthropogenic drivers such as greenhouse gas emissions from human activities — especially by reducing CO2 emissions related to use of fossil fuel. These emissions steam from consumption that of course tends to be higher in rich industrialised countries. The impact of this high level consumption in terms of global warming tend to be worse for the poorest countries who do not have the resources for protection against the consequences such as possible sea-level rise, drought, floods etc. Loss of healthy life years as a result of global environmental change is predicted to be 500 times greater in poor African populations than in European populations.

On the other hand, at the national level, the issue of climate change adaptation does not necessarily relate to the inequity between the developed and less developed countries. Adaptation to climate change can be achieved to a large extent through building sustainable and spatially enabled land administration systems. In fact, implementation of such systems will benefit all countries throughout the globe. The systems should enable control of access to land

Adaptation to climate change can be achieved to a large extent through building sustainable and spatially enabled land administration systems

as well as control of the use of land. Such integrated land administration systems should include the perspective of possible future climate change and any consequent natural disasters. The systems should identify all prone areas subject to sea-level rise, drought, flooding, fires, etc. as well as measures and regulations to prevent the impact of predicted climate change (*Enemark, 2011*).

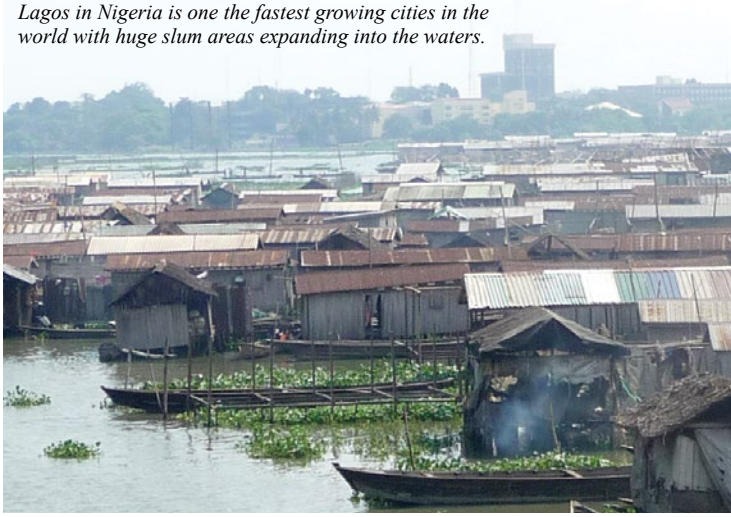
Rapid urbanisation

Urbanisation is a major change that is taking place globally. By 2007, half of the world's population (or around 3.3 billion people) was living in urban areas. It is estimated that a further 500 million people will be urbanised in the next five years and projections indicate that the percentage of the world's population urbanised by 2030 will be 60%. This rush to the cities, caused in part by the attraction of opportunities for wealth generation, has generated the phenomenon of 'megacities' that have a population of over 10 million. There are currently about 25 megacities with about 15 being in Asia, the world's economic geography having shifted to Asia. The agenda on sustainable cities is driven by UN-HABITAT through the State of the World's Cities Series (*e.g. UN-Habitat, 2012).*

This incredibly rapid growth of megacities causes severe ecological, economical and social problems. It is increasingly difficult to manage this growth in a sustainable way. It is recognised that over 70% of the growth currently happens outside of the formal planning process and that 30% of urban populations in less developed countries is living in slums or informal settlements, i.e. where vacant state-owned or private land is occupied illegally and used for slum dwellings. In sub-Saharan Africa, 90% of all new urban settlements are taking the form of slums. These are especially vulnerable to climate change impacts as they are usually built on hazardous sites in high-risk locations. Even in developed countries unplanned or informal urban development is a major issue.

Urbanisation with the continuing concentration of economic activities in cities is inevitable and generally desirable. However, this increase in economic density needs to be balanced with environmental safeguarding through sustainable development policies and land policies need to manage and connect megacities and their hinterlands holistically to maximise the significant economic and social benefits across the region. Rapid urbanisation challenges the human right of access to land and shelter. Slum upgrading approaches need to be more holistic and integrated into broader slum prevention shelter policies, and appropriate shelter policies. Sound land management, governance and administration are the key measure to address these urban challenges.

Lagos in Nigeria is one the fastest growing cities in the world with huge slum areas expanding into the waters.



The way ahead

There is a general consensus that governing the people-to-land relationship is in the heart of the global agenda. In this regard, it must be recognised that land governance and the operational component of land administration systems need a spatial framework of large-scale mapping to operate. This spatial framework shows the way land is divided into parcels and plots for specific use and possession. In many less developed countries this spatial framework is not yet in place and therefore leaves the majority of the land (often more than 70%) outside the formal systems of land management and administration.

There is an urgent need to build simple and basic systems using a flexible and low-cost approach to identify the way land is occupied and used. When considering the resources and capacities required for building such systems and the connected basic spatial framework in less developed countries, the western concepts may well be seen as the end target but not as the point of entry. When assessing technology and investment choices, the focus should be on a "fit-for-purpose approach" that will meet the needs of society today and that can be incrementally improved over time *(FIG/World Bank, 2014)*. Building such frameworks will establish the link between people and land, and thereby enable management and monitoring of improvements in relation to meeting aims and objectives of adopted land policies as well as facing the global agenda.

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